State Water Plan Update Urged During Visits

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — DEP Secretary David E. Hess called for updating the state's water plan and identifying critical water-planning areas during visits to the Hourglass Foundation's Water Forum held May 16 in Lancaster and the Lehigh Valley Water Suppliers' annual Water Issues Luncheon May 10 in Bath.

"Gov. Schweiker has proclaimed May 5-11 Safe Drinking Water Week in Pennsylvania to bring greater awareness to our valuable water resources," Hess said. "The economic and environmental future of our commonwealth depends on a safe and plentiful supply of water.

"Drinking water doesn't simply come from your faucet. It comes from a well, a stream or a reservoir. Clean and plentiful water depends on each of us and on the public and private watersystem operators who work hard to make sure we have a safe supply to drink."

Hess urged the state Legislature to pass the Water Resources Conservation and Protection Act to update the state's water plan and to identify critical water planning areas.

Throughout April and May of last year, DEP conducted 15 water forums across the state to gain input from more than 1,700 citizens about their water-resource needs. That input is the basis of Gov. Schweiker's proposed water-resources legislative initiative, which would provide a historic opportunity to:

• Update the state water plan.

• Identify Critical Water

Planning Areas.

 Promote voluntary water conservation.

• Improve stormwater management and establish private water-well standards.

After a week of special events including a water festival called HydroMania, the Lehigh Valley Water Suppliers (LVWS) wrapped up the week with their annual Water Issues Forum. The luncheon has been a tradition of the non-profit group for more than a decade as the 17 member utilities gather to celebrate National Drinking Water Awareness

LVWS President Doug Bowen, manager of Whitehall Township Authority, said the organization's activities during this week have been focused on promoting water awareness among the Lehigh Valley's youth.

"We completed HydroMania, our second annual water festival, where approximately 1,000 students learned about the importance of source water protection," Bowen said.

As part of Safe Drinking Water Week, DEP recognized 1,567 Pennsylvania water-supply systems that have complied with all federal and state drinking water-quality standards and monitoring requirements during

"We want to recognize the extraordinary record of compliance for water suppliers who have met all of their monitoring and treatment requirements during the year," Hess said. "These suppliers have produced water for public consumption that complies with and often exceeds additional drinking-water standards."

Each system will receive a certificate from DEP to recognize its work in preserving water as a precious natural resource, for conserving drinking and groundwater supplies, and for maintaining water quality.

'Everyone can get involved in protecting water supplies by joining a local watershed-protection group, taking steps to conserve the water they use, and supporting local water-system improvements that will ensure safer drinking-water supplies," Hess

At the Hourglass Foundation Water Forum In Lancaster, Hess served as the featured speaker on a panel discussion on the topic, "Is Lancaster County Running Out of Water?" Also on the panel were Jeanne Sanntag, chair of the Lancaster County Water Resources Task Force; Tom Baldrige, president, Lancaster Chamber of Business and Industry; and Daniel Zimmerman, Warwick Township Manager and chair of the Lancaster County Planning Commission. The panel moderator was Donald Roseman Jr., president of the Hourglass Foundation. More than 50 people attended the forum, including Lancaster County Commissioners Paul Thibault and Ronald Ford.

During the forum, Hess urged the state legislature to pass the Water Resources Conservation and Protection Act, which would update the state's water plan and identify critical water-planning

"Last week, I toured nine different watershed-restoration projects with the Lancaster County Conservation District, and it was obvious the people of Lancaster care deeply about improving water quality," Hess said. "We now need to carry that concern one step further and deal with water-quantity issues.'

The mission of the Hourglass Foundation is to inform citizens about the issues arising from the growth and development of Lancaster County and provide both public forums and open channels of communication by connecting local people, organizations, communities and government to discuss common issues and to solve growth-related problems.

For more information on drinking water or the water systems recognized, visit DEP through the PA PowerPort at www.state.pa.us, PA Keyword: "drinking water." To see pictures of the visit, go to DEP's website and click on "scrapbook."

Marketers May Be Exempt From License Registration

PIKETON, Ohio - Ohio farmers who sell their products at larmer's markets, farm product auctions, and similar direct marketing outlets may be exempt from food license registration and inspection if they meet certain requirements.

An amendment in Ohio's Uniform Food Safety Code, Senate Bill 136 passed by the Ohio General Assembly last fall, allows for retail food establishment license and inspection exemptions from direct agricultural marketing facilities based upon the types of foods being sold.

John Ellerman, an Ohio State University Extension agricultural marketing specialist, said the change in the law was designed to make it easier and less expensive for smaller farmers to maintain their business.

"When the Uniform Food Safety Code was originally passed, all direct food marketers had to have a retail food license that was obtained from the local health department. Prices ranged anywhere from \$100 to \$500," said Ellerman, who works at Ohio State's South Centers in Piketon, Ohio. "This created a public outcry because for the small-scale producer selling a couple hundred dollars of vegetables a year, he simply can't afford that cost.

According to the change in the law, farmers who sell at a farmer's market can claim exemption if they only sell one or more of the following:

- Commercially pre-packaged food that is not potentially hazardous, on the condition that the food is contained in displays on the premises where business is conducted and the total space of the display is less than or equal to 100 cubic feet.
- Fresh unprocessed fruits or
- Maple syrup, sorghum or

• Products from a cottage food production operation and if they are properly labeled. Labeling requirements include name and address of the operation; name of the food product; ingredients; net weight or net volume; and a statement in 10-point type that the product is home produced.

Farmers who sell at farm auctions can claim exemption if one or more of the following items are offered for sale:

• Eggs sold to the final consumer if obtained from an exempt farm (500 or fewer hens).

• Poultry sold to the final consumer if obtained from an exempt farm (1,000 or fewer chickens raised, processed and sold per year).

 Non-amendable meats sold to the final consumer, such as rabbit, bison, ostrich or emu.

• Fresh unprocessed fruits or vegetables.

• Maple syrup, sorghum or honev.

 Products from a cottage food production operation and if they are properly labeled. Labeling requirements include name and address of the operation; name of the food product; ingredients; net weight or net volume; and a statement in 10-point type that the product is home pro-

A farm market may claim exemption if one or more of the following items are offered for

• Commercially pre-packaged food that is not potentially hazardous, on the condition that the food is contained in displays on the premises where business is conducted and the total space of the display is less than or equal to 100 cubic feet.

• Fresh unprocessed fruits or vegetables.

Maple syrup, sorghum or

- Products from a cottage food production operation and if they are properly labeled. Labeling requirements include name and address of the operation; name of the food product; ingredients; net weight or net volume; and a statement in 10-point type that the product is home produced.
- · Cider and other juices manufactured on-site.
- Eggs sold to the final consumer if obtained from an
- Poultry sold to the final consumer if obtained from an Code and Senate Bill 136 exempt farm (1,000 or fewer at the above web sites. Spe-

chickens raised, processed and sold per year).

 Non-amendable meats sold to the final consumer, such as rabbit, bison, ostrich or emu, on the condition that the person offering to sell the meat raises and processes the animals.

Ellerman said that home bakers are also exempt from obtaining a license if they are not producing any potentially hazardous baked goods. "Things like bread are fine, but if someone wants to bake and sell something like a creme pie, a home bakers license is required," he said. "One item that is still controversial is marketing meat and eggs at farmer's markets. You can sell them directly to the final consumer at product auctions and farm markets, but not at farmer's markets without a mobile retail food license. The meat has to be state or USDA-inspected when sold with a mobile retail food li-

Ellerman said that farm markets, farmers' markets, and farm product auctions seeking exemption must register with the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Forms or further information is available at http:// www.ohiofruit.org or http:// www.ohiovegetables.org by following links on "Growers News" and "Legislative and Regulatory Issues." Information may also be obtained from the Ohio Department of Agriculture's website at http://www.state.oh.us/agr/ and following links on "Food Safety."

More information is available regarding cottage food production, maple syrup and sorghum processing, beekeeping and selling honey, mobile retail food license labeling, additional miscellaneous exemptions, and other definitions relative to the Uniform Food Safety

Code and Senate Bill 136

Food Safety at (614) 728-6250. "Farmers should contact their

cific questions should be ad-

dressed to the ODA, Division of

local health department to apply for a mobile retail food establishment license and they can use the license anywhere in the state." said Ellerman.

"My recommendation is that sellers at farmer's markets, roadside markets and produce auctions be assertive in working with their local health departments. It has been my experience that most health department personnel working with food safety issues will work with producers to help them meet food safety requirements," said Ellerman. "It's important for a farmer to ask for help. By doing so they can develop a win-win situation."

Ellerman also encourages producers to involve their local Extension agent in the process. "There are obstacles in farmers getting the knowledge they need to do it right, and that's where county agents can play a role," he said.

Direct agricultural markets are increasing throughout the USDA, farmer's markets have increased 63 percent from 1994 to 2000. More than 2,800 farmer's markets operate in the U.S. The ODA lists more that 600 statewide farm markets, roadside markets, produce auctions, and other agricultural markets in its Ohio Farmers Market Directory.

"The Ultimate In Cow Comfort"

Heaviest... Strongest... Driest.. Most Effective... The BEST!



Freestall Cow Mattress System **Economical Alternative for Cow Comfort**

DURAMAT

"High Performance Comfort for the Traditional Barn" SOLID RUBBER COMFORT

2 Sizes 48"x65" & 48"x72" Random Patterned Surface 5 year manufacturer's warranty 1-1/4" vulcanized comfort

Grooved bottom for more softness and efficient drainage Single Piece Widths

No Seams... No Interlocks... No Problems... **ALLEYMAT[™]**

Continuous **Rubber Flooring**

up to 88" **Custom Lengths** to 500 ft.



NORTH BROOK FARMS Toll Free: 877-624-2638

Web Site: www.northbrookfarms.com Ask us about PLASTICS for your Building Needs

NOTICE **EXTENDED PARTS DEPARTMENT** STORE HOURS **EFFECTIVE MONDAY. APRIL 1. 2002** To Better Serve You During The Busy Planting Season

APRIL - MAY - JUNE Mon., Tues., Thurs. & Fri. 7am-8pm Wed. 7am-6pm; Sat. 7am-3pm

Fax 717-626-0996

133 Rothsville Station Rd. P.O. Box 0395 Lititz, PA 17543-0395 (717) 626-4705

VISA

1-800-414-4705 Farm Plan